13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

792 idols out in a row to use as targets for a shooting practice.
159 His colleague at Hemis sent him a letter, and this he returned
771 with a donkey drawn across the bottom as his pertinent and only reply.

626 One day matters came to a crisis : his lamas gave him a severe beating and shut him up in solitary confinement. Yet by every token he was their *Skushog*, and one of them seems to have relented and released him. The two came to Leh, where the *Skushog* first went to the State Hospital to have his external wounds attended to by the Indian Sub-Assistant Surgeon, but his internal treatment he could only trust to the English doctor, so for that he came to the Mission Hospital, where he also received a lesson on Western professional etiquette. The monasterial difficulties resulted in a court case, following which certain of his lamas were sent to prison in Leh, which hardly bettered the relations between them and their spiritual head.

It was not now practicable for him to return to Trigtse, and the question arose as to what was to be done with him, for still he was their *Skushog* and entitled to the financial benefits of his office. The matter came up before the British Joint Commissioner, the Wazir or State Joint Commissioner, and eventually was taken to H.H. the Maharajah of Kashmir. The result of it all was that in 1916 he went down to India, and for two or three years vanished into oblivion. Early in 1920 he again appeared in Ladak with one lama servant, giving stange accounts of his experiences in India. He said that he had served as a common sepoy in Baluchistan, alleged that in some capacity he had been as far as Basra, that he had acted as bearer to an English officer with alcoholic tendencies, and also that he had been connected with a Colonel Sahib in the neighbourhood of Madras, who had treated him as his own son, and of whom he always spoke with sincere and friendly gratitude. He still maintained his utter disbelief in the religion of his fathers. The people

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

792 called him " the Mad Skushog," but, said he, " I am not mad,
159 I don't believe in it at all." The problem of his sustenance
771 and the dues of the monastery remained, for still no one else could be their *Skushog* during his lifetime, yet he entirely
[791] repudiated his office. The Mussulmans in Leh pressed him to join their ranks, offering monetary advantages, and the Buddhists were naturally very upset when he asserted that the only religion which appealed to him was Christianity, and vowed he would embrace it. He came to the Moravian missionaries and asked them to accept him. It was a difficult situation, as his sincerity, especially after his wild dissipated life, needed proof, but at last they began to give him instruction, telling him that study and probation were necessary first. He came regularly to read with one of the missionaries, who found him a most interesting and quite intelligent pupil, to whom some of the things which puzzle Occidental minds were perfectly easy, while other fundamental ideas, which our minds can accept unhesitatingly, he as frankly avowed he could not believe.

• [626] At about this time, living as he was with his one lama servant in the town, and visiting Mussulman and Buddhist homes alike, he began to be alarmed for his personal safety. After taking an evening meal out, both he and his servant were ill, and he suspected poisoning. He came to the missionaries and begged them to take him into their compound, where he knew he would be safe. After some consideration, he was given accommodation, and it was a strange thing to look up the compound in the morning and see the *Skushog* sitting on his steps in the sunshine, studying the Bible. We still sus-
[557] pected that the desire to join the Christian religion was secondary, and this suspicion grew when it was found that he had hoped to get a political post under the British Government, and so go back to Tibet under its protection. Without it he certainly dare not venture, for he feared the Tibetans would dispose of both him and his father, by tying them up

14: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1947 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

prising that in the rarefied atmosphere of such high altitudes as in Ladakh, where there is little precipitation and the land extremely dry and sandy, the power of the sun is very great. This in turn produces the winds which blow almost constantly from the south and south-westerly directions. The winds on the highlands of Rupshu, for instance, are continuous throughout the year, and they blow with great force when there is not even a vestige of cloud. These winds are dry and extremely cold, since they blow over the glaciers and snow accumulations, so that it may be truly said that Ladakh is in the belt of "windswept Central Asia." When travelling in these regions you cannot fail to observe that when the day is cloudy the strength of the wind is not so great; sometimes, indeed, there is no wind at all, whilst it rises to a gale immediately the skies clear. This is one reason why the traveller in these elevated regions prefers to cross the high passes ranging from 13,000 to 18,000 feet when the sky is overcast. You can never be certain of weather conditions on a pass, but when bad weather is encountered it is easier to tolerate a mist or even heavy snowfall than a powerful wind, which not only impedes progress but chills you to the bone. Long exposure to such a wind, be the sun ever so bright and warm, can reduce your morale and physical energy to a point bordering on collapse.

The peasants of Ladakh are sturdy and cheerful people, inured to long exposure to the sun and wind. Their physical endurance when on their trading expeditions or when carrying heavy loads over a pass in the teeth of a howling wind or blinding blizzard is phenomenal. They contrive to raise crops as good as can be expected considering the unpromising nature of the soil coupled with the difficulties of cultivating them at extremely high altitudes.

The herd instinct, so notably developed in the Tibetans, precludes any effort on the part of the individual to increase his annual output of crops. If a peasant wishes to open up a piece of waste land or contemplates cutting a watercourse to irrigate it, he is obliged to obtain the permission of the community. His well-intentioned plans are usually frustrated by the prejudice and conservatism of the villagers. They at once obstruct him by saying that any such enterprise would interfere with the area required for the pasturage of the communal flocks. The immediate result is that any idea of agricultural progress is strangled at its birth by the tyrannical communal conscience, which is contented to remain *in statu quo* as regards agricultural pursuits.

The practice of interchange of farming implements, such as has been customary from time immemorial, and the borrowing of oxen to till the land, tend to deprive a man of his inalienable right to independence. This is mainly due to the fact that the average Tibetan is too poor to purchase his own farm implements and too indigent to support the number of cattle necessary for the proper development of his farm. The measure of a farmer's wealth is calculated by the number of his horses, sheep, goats, and oxen, as well as the size of his granary. Very little money is passed from hand to hand, labour being paid for in man-power or in grain. Many peasants who have land but not sufficient manure to enrich it sub-let part or the whole of it on the understanding that the tenant

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
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595 [851] [842] although sometimes he is known. It was true, the Thakur said, that when a family had no issue, a man from outside was called in in an attempt to sire a child for them. Such a man was called a *p'horjag* (*P'ho-rJag*) as in other parts of the Himalayas and in Tibet where the custom was also followed. It was not particularly well looked upon in Lahul, and was only rarely resorted to. Monogamous families seemed to favour it more than polyandrous ones, he added.

595 855 [854] The care and upbringing of the children were also a joint concern, I was told. It could not be said that any one parent, be it one of the fathers or the mother, had a more important role to play in this respect than the others. But of course, when children were very young, the mother looked after them more than the fathers. Later on, it was perhaps the brother with the greatest personality who played a prominent part in the education of the children. On the whole, however, the men seemed afraid of their sons, believing that if they treated them badly, they themselves might suffer for it later on in life.

595 428 [636] Young people often revolted against polyandry, but experience showed that it was nevertheless still the best policy to follow. Fathers put pressure on their boys, when they rose in rebellion against the idea of sharing a wife, by threatening to withold handing down the family property to them. This was generally quite sufficient to make the young men change their minds.

595 [598] [187] In conclusion, summing up his views on polyandry, Thakur Partap Chand said that the system worked pretty smoothly on the whole. There was little quarrelling and not much jealousy. The reason for which this matrimonial custom was practised was an economic one: the soil was poor, the holdings small, and there was little possibility of acquiring other arable land. Each family had to hang on to what it owned; partition was strenuously avoided.

601 I obtained a few kinship terms from the informant, but not as many as I was able to gather, later, in other areas of Tibetan culture. Those I obtained in Lahul, however, are of interest from a comparative point of view, because they are more archaic linguistically than those now in use in Tibet proper and show a persistance of old forms in these remote western valleys. Grandfather (both father's and mother's father) is *meme* (*Mes-mes*) in Lahul; grand uncles (paternal and maternal grandfather's brothers), *lamas* (*bLama*), and any old men are also called by this appellation. Grandmother (mother's and father's mother) is *api* (*Ap'hyi*), as are also maternal and paternal grand aunts, nuns, known as *chomos* (*Jo-mo*), and other old women.

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614 4. Kyin-go-pa (*K'hyi-mGo-pa*), "Dog-headed one".
5. Ödsal-lha-pa (*aOd-gSal-lHa-pa*), "Luminous, clear god one".
6. Dzes-pa-pa (*mDzes-pa-pa*), "Lovely one".
7. Nyishara-pa (*Nyishar-ra-pa*), "Sunrise one".
8. Yige-pa (*Yige-pa*), "Letter one".
9. Gyan-shing-pa (*rGyan-shing-pa*), "Betting wood one".
10. Trang-tug-pa (*Grang-t'hug-pa*), "Cold soup one".
11. Tarrawa-pa (*Tar-ra-ba-pa*), "Buttermilk one".
12. Sumpo-pa (*gSum-p'ho-pa*), "Thrice male one".
13. Langtso-rü-pa (*Lang-ts'ho-rus-pa*), "Adolescent clan one".
14. Kyungo-pa (*K'hyung-mGo-pa*), "*Garuda* headed one" (the Garuda is the Hindu mythical bird).
15. Jamshar-pa (*aJam-shar-pa*), "Mild shining one".
16. Leh-pa (*sLa-pa*), "Man from Leh" (in Ladak).

Of these, numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 14 and 16 of course, are also to be found in Ladak, and the Lahuli clans of the same name are related to those in the neighbouring area of Kashmir.

[582] Clan exogamy was the rule, the Wazir told me, and there were very few even today who dared to transgress this injunction. There had been [626] a marriage within the Lönchen-pa clan, it seemed, but its members had found it very difficult to live down; they had been held up as objects of ridicule in the whole of Lahul ever since.

7. OTHER RELEVANT POINTS INVESTIGATED

114 Being keen to investigate the psychology of polyandrous people, I also sought, while in Lahul, to gather data which appeared to me could have a bearing on the psychological structure of the individuals involved. Consequently I enquired from the Thakur about initiation ceremonies [115] and paid a number of visits to medical men to question them on nervous ailments in their practices.

114 852 Thakur Partap Chand told me that when a son was born to a family, a special ceremony took place which my notes call phonetically *Gotsu* (probably *mGo-aDzug*, "beginning") in Tibetan. It should be remembered that at the time, I as yet knew no Tibetan and was forced to take down names and words as they appeared to sound to me – a process highly unreliable in that language as differences of meaning often depend on spelling and not on pronunciation. When the boy is not yet 852 twelve months old, on the day of the Tibetan New Year (usually in February), he is strapped onto his mother's back and taken up to the

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b) *Polyandry in Ladak*

595 1. *Generalities*

From the informants and interpreters whom I mention in Appendix 2, acknowledging their services, I heard that polyandry was practised quite intensely in and all around Leh. Asked what the proportion of polyandrous families was to the rest of the Buddhist population (the only one, naturally, among which polyandry was to be found), my informants told me that out of one hundred families, ninety of them lived in this form of matrimony. I enquired about the remaining ten per cent; was it that they did not want polyandry, or that they were not able, for lack of brothers in a family for instance, to follow the prevalent custom? The answer was that both explanations were correct. In some cases, polyandry was not possible because of the composition of the family. But in others, polyandry was deliberately rejected, as something undesirable. There was a growing tendency to this effect, it seemed, in Leh, especially among the better educated, the wealthier and those who had travelled to the big cities in the plains of India.

The tendency to give up polyandry, was not well looked upon by the rest of the community. It was considered all wrong, and parents would disinherit their sons and daughters who refused to live in accordance with the traditional rules of marriage. This was interpreted as showing that the polyandrous Ladaki Buddhists were very moral in their outlook and would not tolerate any laxity in their customs. Nono Tse-P'hün (short for Tseten P'hüntzok), who was my principal interpreter and one of my best informants, although a Christian himself (later, in 1947, he became Tehsildar of Ladak), assured me that the Buddhists were the most moral of all the communities living in Leh, that is the most strict with those of their members who would not conform to the habitual standards of correct and accepted social behaviour.

595 The problem of what happens to surplus women in a polyandrous society immediately came to mind when I began my investigations. As the proportion of men to women among the polyandrous Buddhists was roughly equal (only thirteen more men than women), it was obvious that if ninety percent of the one thousand two hundred and eighty seven strong community actually practised polyandry, quite a number of unbetrothed women would have to be accounted for. The reply which I got to this question was that, although many men's sisters remained at home as spinsters among the wealthy, in the bulk of the community, unmarried women found Moslem husbands to whom they were only

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on the other hand, the divorce occurs at the request of the *bag-ma* wife or of the *mag-pa* husband, the equivalent in money of a horse will be given to the injured party. This is called *P'ho-skyur-ta* (*P'ho-bSkyur-rTa*) or "man thrown out horse". During the reign of the Tibetan kings of Western Tibet, real horses and cows were handed over. But with the accession of the Dogra masters, Wazir-i-Wazarat Akbar Ali Shah, who ruled in Ladak in the early 1870s, converted the value of these animals into cash, a horse being estimated as worth Rs. 25, and a cow Rs. 12/8/–. Henceforward, compensation had to be paid in money and no longer in kind.

Extra-marital relations do occur in Ladak among polyandrous people, but on the whole all my informants, including the Reverend W. Asboe, were very insistant that those who practised polyandry were more "moral" than the others who did not. They meant by this, that the pressure of public opinion upon remaining faithful to the custom and not departing from what was expected of those living matrimonially in this fashion was very great and, usually, very effective in enforcing the rule.

In spite of this, it could not be said that departures from this moral rule did not occur. Lamas who had taken vows of celibacy, such as the Gelug-pas for instance, were known occasionally to get involved in illicit love affairs. A woman who was thus a partner to the strayings of a lama was known as a *la-dud* (*bLa-aDrud*), "dragger away of lama".

Unmarried girls who took lovers might be forced to marry them, if the man was unmarried. If he was already wed, he might have to divorce and marry the girl, or simply give her the necessary means of livelihood. Should she have a child by him, she would be turned out of her family's house and beaten, and the man would, in most instances, be obliged to marry her. The only exception could occur if he should already be married and have children, when he would have to arrange for the upkeep of his paramour and her child. As it was, this did not happen very often, all young girls normally being chaperoned when they attended public festivals. It was here that lovers met, it was admitted, but it would be difficult for an unmarried daughter, properly accompanied, to start an intrigue in this way.

Women living in polyandry did have lovers, I was told, because they did not always feel the affection which they should have for their many husbands. A *bag-ma* wife caught in the act would be beaten, driven out of the house and divorced, if she was not yet a mother. If she had children, she would not be driven away, but her paramour would be